

[English]

Importance of TV Programmes

232. SHRI VIJAY GOEL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the government have conducted and study/survey regarding the progress made on the T.V. programmes after the introduction of foreign TV channels for Indian viewers :

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) whether the Government have received any feedback from the viewers who thought that the foreign channels excel in improving advertising programmes for consumer goods, their introduction has done little to improve the quality of the entertainment programmes which are mostly the re-run of the popular Doordarshan serials;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if so, whether the Government are contemplating any change in its policy to permit only such foreign TV channels which promise to cater to Indian cultural values, education and tastes; and

(f) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY) : (a) No specific study has been conducted by Doordarshan.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) to (f) There are different perceptions about the programmes of the foreign channels. The Government has introduced the Broadcasting Bill, 1997 in the Parliament which inter alia provides for a regulatory authority for all the TV channels in the country. This bill is currently being examined by a Select Committee of the Parliament.

Portable Satellite Communication Service

233. SHRI K.P. NAIDU : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the salient features of Mini-M, the new portable satellite communication service;

(b) the call charges per minute;

(c) whether connections are given to all appli-

cants; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Sir, Inmarsat-phone Mini-M is the new global mobile phone service supporting voice telephones, fax and data services at 2.4 kbps. Inmarsat-phone Mini-M terminals are among the smallest and lightest (approximately 2.4 kg) satellite phones ever made.

The cost of the terminal is appx Rs. 2.75 lakhs, inclusive of all taxes and duties.

(b) The call charges per minutes is around Rs. 116/-

(c) Connections are given to applicants after the technical scrutiny of their applications in the Deptt. of Telecommunications are subsequent clearance of the case in Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC) of Ministry of Communications.

(d) In view of (c) above, the question does not arise.

Increase in Frequency of Howrah-Nagpur Azad Hind Express

234. SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to increase the frequency of Howrah-Nagpur Azad Hind Express;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) There is no proposal at present to increase the frequency of 1029/1030 Howrah-Pune Azad Hind Express via Nagpur.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Operational and resource constraints.

Running of EMU Service between Kharagpur and Sealdah

235. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have since taken any